MICHIGAN'S LGBTQ NEWS SOURCE SINCE 1993

BTL 25th ANNIVERSARY

Between THE Lines

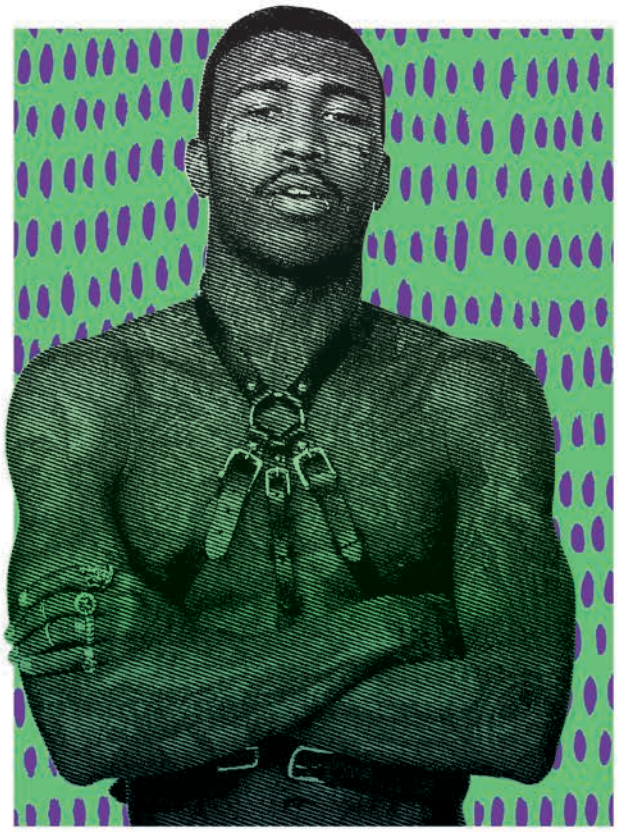
Affirmations Looks to Restructure With Resolve

Court Sides with Trump on Trans Military Ban

Give Margaret Cho a Hand

Signing On To Equality

Whitmer Prohibits State Employment Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity



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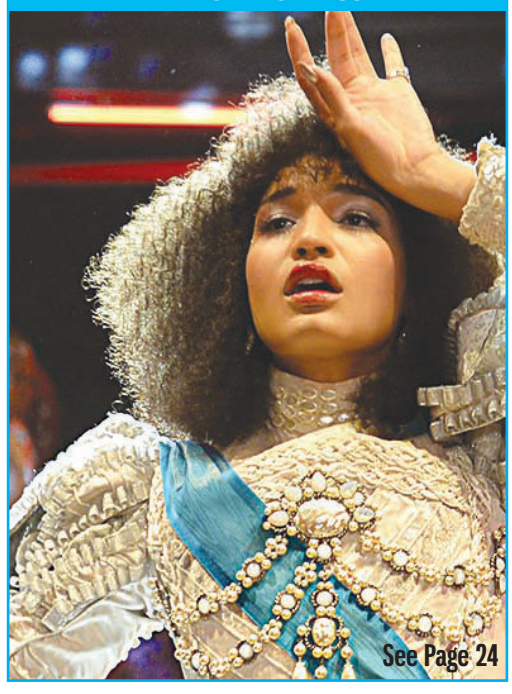

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PRIDE SOURCE MEDIA GROUP
20222 Farmington Rd., Livonia, Michigan 48152
Phone 734.293.7200

PUBLISHERS
Susan Horowitz & Jan Stevenson

MEMBER OF
Michigan Press Assoication
National LGBT Media Association
National Gay & Lesbian Chamber
Q Syndicate

EDITORIAL
Editor in Chief
Susan Horowitz, 734.293.7200 x 102
susanhorowitz@pridesource.com

Entertainment Editor
Chris Azzopardi, 734.293.7200 x 106
chrisazzopardi@pridesource.com

Feature News Editor
Kate Opalewski, 734.293.7200 x 108
kate@pridesource.com

Editorial Assistant
Eve Kucharski, 734.293.7200 x 105
eve@pridesource.com

News & Feature Writers
Emell Derra Adolphus, Michelle Brown, Ellen Knoppow, Jason Michael, Drew Howard, Jonathan Thurston

CREATIVE
Webmaster & MIS Director
Kevin Bryant, kevinbryant@pridesource.com

Columnists
Charles Alexander, Michelle E. Brown, Mikey Rox, D'Anne Witkowski, Gwendolyn Ann Smith

Cartoonists
Paul Berg, Dave Brousseau

Contributing Photographers
Andrew Potter, Alexander Godin, Andrew Cohen

ADVERTISING & SALES
Director of Sales
Jan Stevenson, 734.293.7200 x 101
jan@pridesource.com

Sales Representatives
Ann Cox, 734.293.7200 x 103
anncox@pridesource.com

Donelle Kremke, 734.293.7200 x 104
donelle@pridesource.com

National Advertising Representative
Rivendell Media, 212.242.6863

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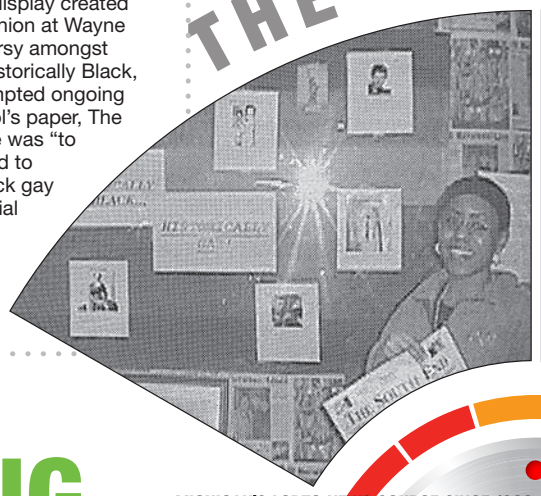
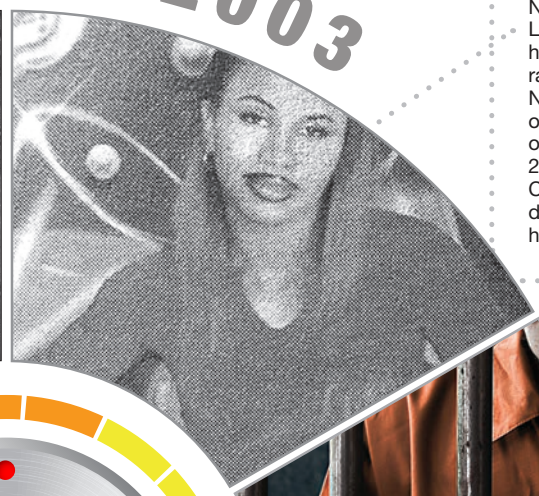
FLASHING BACK TO THE PAST:

THE '00S – 2003





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BTL 25th ANNIVERSARY

Between THE Lines

February - LGBT Black History Exhibit at WSU Raises Questions: A one-week display created by the LGBT Students of Color Union at Wayne State University caused controversy amongst students on campus. Entitled "Historically Black, Historically Gay," the exhibit prompted ongoing articles and dialogue in the school's paper, The South End. The display's purpose was "to show pride for LGBT students and to demonstrate the existence of black gay people – that they overcame social barriers."

March - March Decries Trans Killings: Two dozen trans activists and the family of Nikki Nicholas marched through downtown Lansing on March 9 to draw attention to hate-motivated violence in Michigan. The rally, organized by the newly formed group, National Association for the Advancement of Transgender People, was held in honor of Nicholas, who was murdered on Feb. 21 at the age of 19. Marchers came to the Captiol in hopes that their presence would draw attention to the need for a statewide hate crime law that includes LGBT people.

April - MI Gay Prisoners Will No Longer Be Identified: The Michigan Department of Corrections decided to stop identifying prisoners as "homosexuals" on its forms and records, which resulted in incidents of harassment, violence and discriminatory treatment against LGBT inmates. The move followed a lengthy battle with the ACLU and proactive citizens. Such information was "often shared recklessly by staff among each other and with other inmates, even though this information should not have been disclosed," said Jay Kaplan, staff attorney at the ACLU of Michigan LGBT Project.

September - Gay Gun Advocates Start 'Pink Pistols': A Michigan chapter of the Pink Pistols was started by Albert Lowe. The gay gun-rights group had at the time 37 chapters in the U.S. and at least 5,000 members. Lowe said his primary reason for starting the Michigan chapter was to provide a forum to "go out and have fun target shooting" in an atmosphere that is friendly to gays, lesbians and others who may not feel comfortable in traditional gun groups.

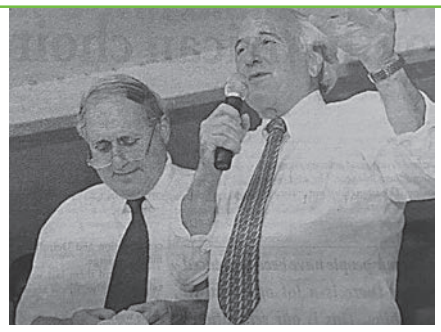
July - Local Paper Will Print Same-Sex Marriage Announcements: Joining the ranks of five other newspapers in Michigan, the Lansing State Journal announced that beginning on July 27, the paper will print same-sex engagement, commitment ceremony and marriage announcements in its "Living" section. As a part of GLAAD's "Announcing Equality" campaign, 211 newspapers began printing same-sex union announcements. Michigan papers included the Ann Arbor News, Detroit News, Kalamazoo Gazette, Saginaw News, Oakland Press and LSJ.

HIV/AIDS HAPPENINGS IN 2003

Ypsilanti Twp. OKs Needle Exchange: The Ypsilanti Township Board approved an exemption to allow a six-month-long needle exchange program in the township to help reduce the spread of HIV among addicts who share needles. According to the plan, HIV & AIDS Resource Center in Ypsilanti started distributing new needles to drug users in the township. HARC also culled old needles from drug users as well.

HIV/AIDS Education Efforts Take Root Among Arab Men: With the help of two grants, the Midwest AIDS Prevention Project and the Arab Community Center for Economic and Social Services collaborated to invent new ways to get information about HIV testing and prevention into circulation among gay Arab men. Pictured: David Ponsart and Chris Ayoub, outreach workers at ACCESS.

State Study Links Bisexuality to HIV Spread Among Minority Women: Black and Hispanic women were being infected with HIV at a higher rate than the rest of the population in part because many of them didn't know their sex partners were bisexual, according to a study conducted by the Michigan Department of Community Health and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The study found that among HIV-infected men who had sex with other men, 34 percent of black men said they engaged in bisexual behavior, followed by 26 percent of Hispanic men and 13 percent of white men. Of the HIV-positive women studied, 14 percent of white women knew their partner engaged in bisexual behavior, but only 6 percent of black and Hispanic women knew of such behavior by their partners. The study suggested that the disparity in awareness helps account for the rapid spread of HIV in the black community.



MAPP Uses the Power of the Internet to Fight HIV/AIDS: As chat rooms began to replace bathhouses, public restrooms and bookstores, the Midwest AIDS Prevention Project changed the way they targeted the new generation of gay and bisexual men. Using the screenname "SexEd4U," counselors identified themselves in online chat rooms as HIV educators to give people the opportunity to ask questions about HIV, sexually-transmitted diseases and specific risk behaviors.

Levins Step Out to Fight AIDS: Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI) and his brother Congressman Sander Levin (D-Royal Oak) served as honorary co-chairs of Steppin' Out's AIDS Walk Detroit in September. This was the fifth year the Levins had helped lead the group's fundraising efforts in the battle against HIV/AIDS.

AIDS Activist and Doctor Dies: Isabello C. Reyes, Jr., MD, who died on Sept. 27, 2003, worked tirelessly and stood on the front lines advocating for the rights, providing care and instruction, free of charge, for people infected and affected by HIV/AIDS.

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Whitmer Prohibits State Employment Discrimination on Grounds of Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity

BY EVE KUCHARSKI

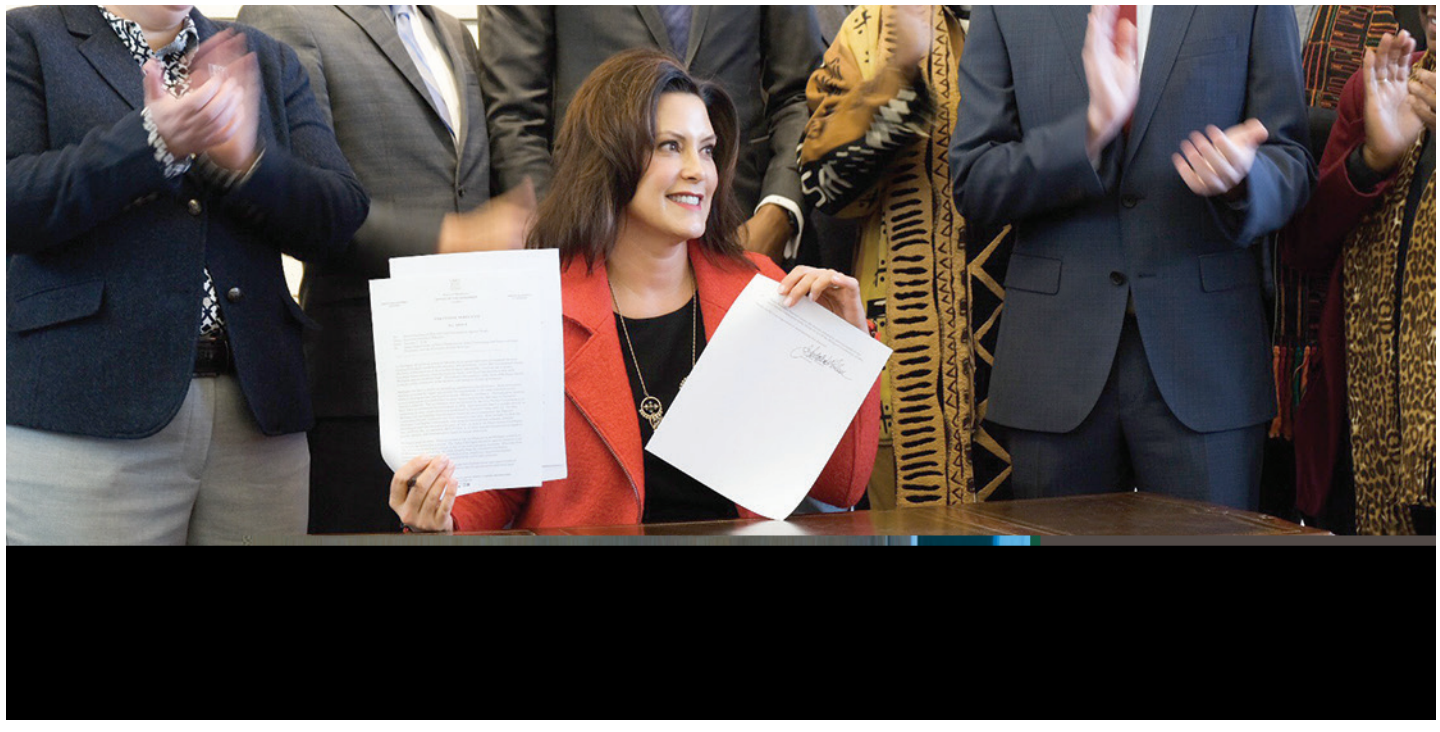
FERNDALE – Gov. Gretchen Whitmer signed an executive directive Monday at Affirmations, Michigan's largest LGBTQ community center, that broke new ground regarding civil rights protections for the LGBTQ community. Directive No. 2019-9 outlined that it would help instill policies to "promote public confidence in the fairness and integrity of state government" by ensuring all Michigan residents receive fair treatment in "employment, state contracting, and when accessing services from state government." The directive strengthens protections in these four ways:

1.) Clarifying that employment protections cover all state employees, including classified and unclassified employees.

2.) Requiring all recipients of state contracts, grants and loans to extend protections to their employees.

3.) Prohibiting discrimination in state services.

4.) Extending prohibitions on discrimination to include discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity or expression – which will now be consistent with the action taken by the Michigan Civil Rights Commission in May, 2018.



Gov. Whitmer displays the newly signed executive directive No. 2019-9 that expands protections for LGBTQ people across Michigan. Courtesy photos: Adam Fox-Long.

"It's pretty tremendous," said ACLU of Michigan Staff Attorney Jay Kaplan. "This is pretty all-encompassing and it's a big step forward toward LGBT equality in Michigan. I think it helps build momentum and set the stage for ultimately what we need, which is to amend our civil rights law to specifically include sexual orientation and gender identity so every aspect of Michigan life would be covered in that respect."

Kaplan added that her "directive went a long way toward doing the things the state of Michigan is able to do even without the legislature" to ensure the fair treatment of LGBTQ people in the state and so they "have dignity in accessing governmental services."

Whitmer's actions earned praise from Equality Michigan as well, the only statewide advocacy organization representing Michigan's LGBTQ community.

"Modernizing Michigan's policies to make it clear that discrimination against LGBTQ people will not be tolerated is long overdue," said Erin Knott, Equality Michigan Interim Executive Director. "We are proud to stand alongside Gov. Gretchen Whitmer as she takes an important step to protect Michigan's LGBTQ community from discrimination. This is a welcome solution to a problem that our community has faced for far too long."

State Sen. Jeremy Moss (D-Southfield) called the move "an encouraging step forward."

"Michigan lags behind the rest of the country in protecting our LGBT community from discrimination," Moss said. "While many gay and trans people in other states have held onto the hope that equality will continue to progress, Michigan residents have questioned whether our state would start progressing at all."

In a press release Whitmer said that not only will the directive help a marginalized group feel more accepted, but it will benefit everyone in Michigan too.

"If we're going to attract the talented workforce our businesses need to create jobs and grow our economy, then we've got to get on the right side of history," Whitmer said. "That's what this executive directive is all about. By strengthening non-discrimination protections in state government employment, contracting and services, we will make Michigan a model of equal opportunity and build a more welcoming and inclusive state that works for everyone."

Kaplan concurred.

"I think she sent a strong message about this administration and that they consider this a priority. They consider it a priority not only about treating people fairly in providing equal opportunities but also what kind of message does the state send if they have policies and practices that are not inclusive that exclude groups of people or marginalize populations," he said. "When you do things like that it negatively impacts the state's economy. ... [She is not] only doing the right thing, the just thing, but is also providing more opportunities for people to want to come to Michigan and invest in the state."

> *"If we're going to attract the talented workforce our businesses need to create jobs and grow our economy, then we've got to get on the right side of history. That's what this executive directive is all about."*
>
> **– Gov. Gretchen Whitmer**

Knott said that this action is a direct motion for legislature to follow suit in expanding Michigan's existing civil rights act.

"It's an example that the Michigan Legislature should follow by taking immediate, meaningful action," Knott said. "First, they should adopt rules in the House and Senate to protect their own employees from anti-LGBT discrimination. Then, they should, at long last, expand the Elliott-Larsen Civil Rights Act to make it fully inclusive for all Michiganders."

Sen. Moss Named Democratic Assistant Minority Leader

LANSING – Last week Sen. Jeremy Moss (D–Southfield) was selected to serve as the Assistant Minority Leader for the Michigan Senate Democratic Caucus.

"I am honored to work with my Senate colleagues and our governor, alongside Leader Ananich, as assistant leader of the Senate Democratic Caucus. A divided government can present a series of challenges, and a series of opportunities. I will be looking for the opportunities in the State Senate to push for bipartisan solutions to boost wages, improve our schools and invest in our infrastructure — while never shying away from the progressive values instilled within me from the 11th Senate District."

Moss is openly gay and represents the cities of Farmington, Farmington Hills, Ferndale, Hazel Park, Huntington Woods, Lathrup Village, Madison Heights, Oak Park, Pleasant Ridge, Southfield and the Charter Township of Royal Oak.

The removal of a same-sex marriage amendment from the draft of Cuba's new constitution has sparked a public debate across the country. (Photo by Yariel Valdés González)

Removal of Marriage From New Cuba Constitution Divides LGBTI Community

LAURA RODRIGUEZ FUENTES

Editor's note: Tremenda Nota is the Washington Blade's media partner in Cuba. This article was originally published on Tremenda Nota's website on Jan. 2.

SANTA CLARA, Cuba — The LGBTI+ community remains divided after the National Assembly modified the marriage amendment in the draft of the new constitution. Part of it defends the yes vote and supports the official campaign, while another group says it will vote against the constitution.

On Saturday, Dec. 22, the same day the Cuban Parliament in Havana ended sessions where changes to the draft Cuban constitution were approved, a group of young people discussed them in Vidal Park in Santa Clara, 300 kilometers from the Cuban capital.

The decision to exclude Article 68, which defined marriage as "the union of two people," from the future constitution was received with bewilderment in the city, which is known in the country for its inclusive spaces for the LGBTI+ community.

According to the National Assembly, the suppression has the goal of "respecting all opinions," an argument that seems to echo the anti-marriage equality campaign from various evangelical churches.

Mariela Castro Espín had referenced to the "blackmail" of these religious groups in a recent interview, although nothing suggested the constitutional text would be modified for this reason and marriage would be subject to another referendum, as part of the Family Code, under a two year deadline.

Castro Espín directs the National Center for Sexual Education (CENESEX) and is also the country's most well-known official LGBTI+ rights activist. Her work has been criticized because it intends to work the agenda of a minority that has been historically marginalized into the political discourse of the same government that has persecuted it and has not to this day offered reparations.

Ramón Silverio is another activist and cultural promoter who directs El Mejunje, a community center known across the country for its drag shows.

Silverio feels that the LGBTI+ community "did not do much to defend (Article 68)."

"There was no counterpart," he admitted. "The churches had a lot of influence, combined with the homophobia that exists in society regarding the issue."

Marriage now appears to be described in Article 82, a passage written in technical and ambiguous language with the declared goal of not closing the door on the legality of partners of the same sex and gender, despite the controversial referendum option.

"We are putting the rights of the most vulnerable people and groups in a somewhat critical position when taking them to a popular referendum," warned Deputy Luis Ángel Adán Roble during Parlament's last session of 2018.

Adán Roble is the only deputy with a speech that mirrors LGBTI+ activism. In the closing session, however, he merely confirmed his support for the change and invited citizens to vote in favor of the draft constitution.

Yes or No?

Dagnis Romero, vice coordinator of the

See **Cuba**, continued on p. 15

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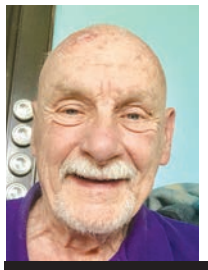


Parting Glances

BY CHARLES ALEXANDER

Channeling Rainbow Creativity in 2019

As an artist, I'm fascinated with the mental phenomenon known as channeling. In the mid-'90s channeling was a cultural fad with many fans.

Channelers brought forth purported messages form ages-old entities and other twilight-zone dimensions and previous lifetimes. Entities possessed the channel or medium who, in turn, delivered the message, the soul-saving advice — or so thousands believed.

One of the most popular was J. Z. Knight. She took mental dictation from Ramtha, a 30,000-year-old sage. (Ramtha's books brought J. Z. nationwide acclaim. And beaucoup tangible American bucks.)

The truth is that the brain is an instrument of incredible flights of creative fantasy. This is evident from a shared commonality: dreaming. How the brain weaves its nighttime imagery is amazing. Breathtaking. Frequently disturbing. Keep a dream journal and see for yourself.

I've had dreams, for example, in which I find myself walking into a gallery and seeing dozens of pictures hanging. Upon awakening I'm aware I've never seen this art before. How does the brain create it? And why only for mere seconds of mental display?

Asked how I make my art I say for statement shorthand that I channel it. I don't have a preconceived idea of what to create. I start. My art unfolds. (I have over 1,000 images on my iPhone.)

According to a recent article in "Scientific American" it takes approximately 10 years of daily application for whatever you are doing – art, music, cooking, bowling, playing golf – for your "gift" to become automatic, second nature.

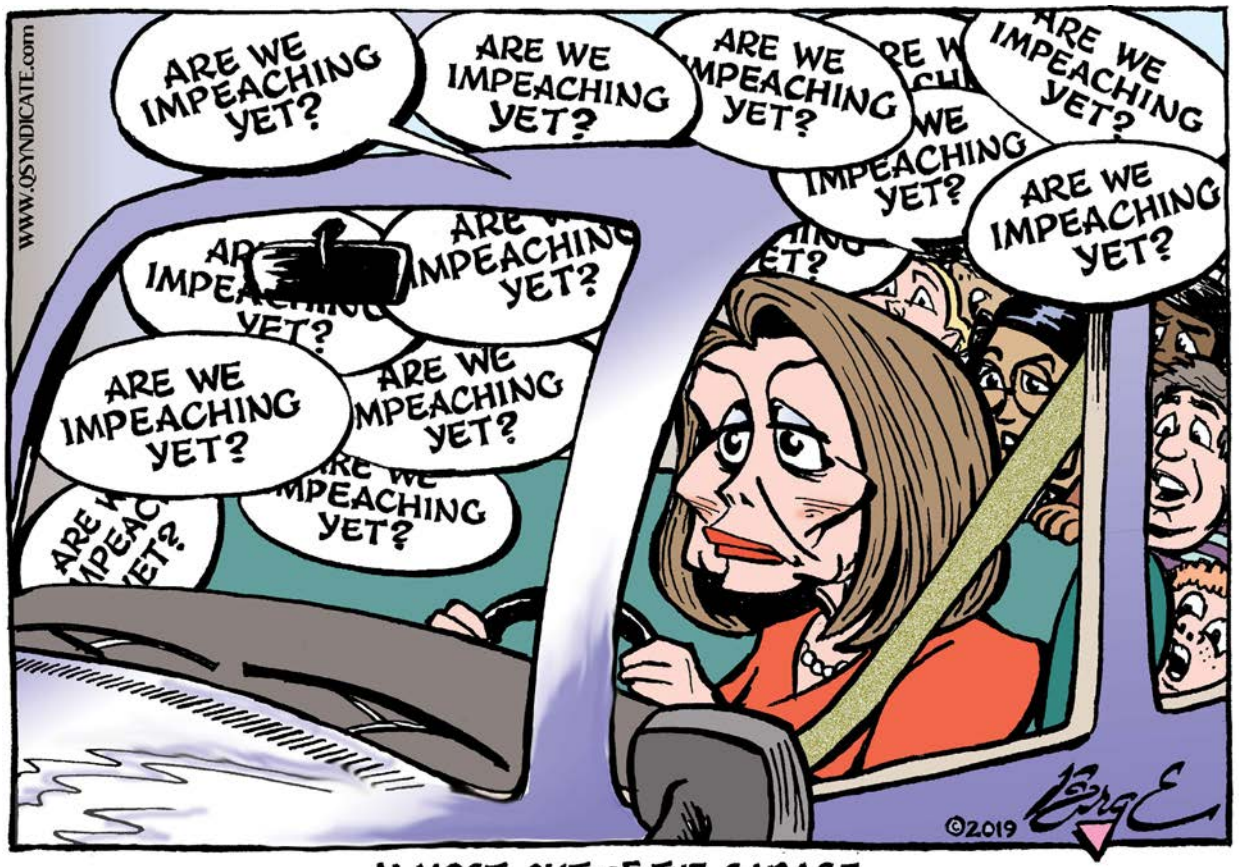
The patterns of expertise become so woven into the fabric of your brain that "the process does you." You too become a channel. In other words, you don't have to give much thought to your golf swing. (It also helps if you're a lesbian.)

I make it a practice of thanking my brain. When I complete a painting, I say thank you. If I recall a long-forgotten name, I say thank you. If I recall lines of poetry, I say thank you. If given an insight or an intuition, I do the same. It works. Two words of gratitude: thank you. Try it and see.

As an artist I feel privileged (not infrequently, amazed, dumbfounded) by being a part of the creative act. Unquestionably, it's a spiritual thing. When I enter the creative zone it's admission into a "timeless space." I'm able to draw on seemingly unlimited psychic energy. Go all-nighters.

Here are some steps to enhancing or initiating creativity: First, learn the basics. Take courses, learn from experts. (Just because you can drip paint on a canvas doesn't make you a Jackson Pollock. Just because you can strum a guitar doesn't make you a Jerry Cantrell.) Unless you're a genius, you've got to pay creative dues to one day become expert.

See **Parting Glances**, continued on next page



ALMOST OUT OF THE GARAGE

Transmissions

We Are One for the Ages

BY GWENDOLYN ANN SMITH

It amazes me how so many seem to view the notion of "transgender people" as if it was something that magically winked into existence just five years ago. It feels as if so many think the moment they first heard of transgender people is the moment transgender people came to existence, rather than it merely being the moment they stopped living in ignorance about the existence of transgender identity.

The truth is, transgender people have always been here.

Now it's not to say that you aren't seeing more transgender people being out and visible than you may have in the recent past. The thing is, everything is more visible now, with the rise of social media and the incessant 24/7 news cycle that always needs something to fill it.

On top of this, as acceptance and visibility for transgender people has grown, more people are feeling safer about coming out as transgender — whether it be people coming out for the first time, or those who have long been stealth finally feel comfortable discussing their own transgender pasts.

So, it may well seem that there are a lot more transgender people at this time and place, and that could lead someone to think that this is somehow a new phenomenon.

The historical record is full of transgender stories, both in mythology and popular culture of the times. We know of the Cybele cult in Ancient Greece, whose members adopted female outfits and identity, and castrated themselves in the service of their deity, and of Egypt's Queen Hatshepsut, who wore male garments and a false beard. These are just two of a great many examples in the ancient world of what we might call "transgender identity" today.

Then there's Queen Christina of Sweden, who abdicated the throne in 1654, adopting the masculine persona of Count Dohna, or the Chevalier d'Eon who opted to live as a woman in the 1770s. One can presume there were plenty more who were not of such renown, living their lives outside of the social columns of the day.

Because those are such old stories, however, it is hard to augment them with the terms of today. We do not know, for example, if Queen Hatshepsut adopted her garments as part of being a ruler, for example, and can only make educated guesses based on the historical record.

We can, however, pretty readily look at figures over the last 100 years,

See **Viewpoint**, continued on next page

►Transmissions
Continued from p. 10

however.

In 1918, some 20 years after Oscar Wilde set the stereotypes of gay male behavior that are still accepted by some today, a person who alternately went by Earl Lind and Jennie June released a book, "Autobiography of an Androgyne." Four years later she penned a second, "The Female-Impersonators."

The language is antiquated by today's standards, and conflates sexuality and gender throughout, but we can still see that June would have likely considered themselves nonbinary or transgender by today's standards.

While June was Living in New York City, Jack Bee Garland was doing social work after serving in the U.S. military in the Philippines and writing for the San Francisco Examiner. He was a transgender man.

Meanwhile, in Germany, transgender and homosexual identities were enjoying a renaissance of sorts, as Magnus Hirschfeld opened the Institut für Sexualwissenschaft (Institute of Sexual Research) and transgender people saw their identities normalized in Germany.

There were popular nightclubs for transgender people in Germany at the time. Likewise, identity papers reflecting their gender identity, and plenty of other progressive views towards transgender identity, we fought for and won.

That is, until the Nazis burned down the institute and sent transgender people to the camps with their homosexual prisoners. Had things been different, maybe we wouldn't have a debate about how new "transgender" is today.

In the post-war era, as the United States tested nuclear bombs, the New York Times hailed a different "bombshell" when Christine Jorgensen returned from Europe after her gender change. With her followed many more through the '50s, into the Stonewall era, and today.

We may be something you don't fully understand, let alone condone, but this doesn't stop us from existing in this world. We have faced adversity and yet we have remained, never fully going away.

That these is a largely unbroken line from Jennie June to today, only interrupted by World War II and the atrocities of Nazi Germany, shows just how long this has existed. We're not the latest fad, akin to "planking" and the "Ice Bucket Challenge."

For those who are not transgender, whether you view yourselves as allies, as neutral, or even as hostile towards transgender people, know this. We're not something new, not some modern contagion caused by the internet or what have you. We've simply always been here, as much a variation of the human condition as left handedness, hair color or sexuality.

We may be something you don't fully understand, let alone condone, but this doesn't stop us from existing in this world. We have faced adversity and yet we have remained, never fully going away.

For transgender people, it's important, even vital, to reclaim our history, and understand where we come from. We are part of a long history, and have a place in this world alongside our non-transgender peers. Many have attempted to erase us, and none likely more successful than Nazi Germany, but yet we remain here today.

As our community continues to grow, driven by the ability to share with each other via our computers and cell phones, we can not only uncover this history, but forge the next links in the long story that is us.

Let us continue to move forward, together.

Gwen Smith is proud of her own contributions to transgender history You'll find her at gwensmith.com.

► Parting Glances
Continued from p. 12

Second, set aside time on a regular basis, if only an hour or two, to be creative. Enjoy the process, rather than focusing on the outcome. View the act of creativity as a form of meditation. It really is.

Thirdly, never give in to negative statements such as, "I wish I could write poetry, but I just don't have it in me. I'll never be as good as Barbara Bakelite. Her souffles are marvelous. If only I could bowl like Don Ninepins, I'd join the Gay Bowlers pronto! If ... if ... if ...."

Replace "I can't" with "I can." I will! Affirm: "I'm willing to discover my special gifts, my unique talents."

Personally, I believe we gay people are on average more creative than our straight counterparts. The universe blesses us with good genes and sensitivities to make this world a beautiful, entertaining, spiritually dynamic, abundantly alive place.

I may be a little off-the-mark on this, but from what I see, hear and experience in our rainbow community, I'm not off by much. Not at all.

(Ramtha and all other 30,000 year-old straight channeling guides be damned! Who needs you? Assuming, of course, Ramtha is straight.)

Charles Alexander is prolific both as a BTL columnist (700-plus columns) and as a well-known LGBT community artist (1000 Facebook images). He is a Spirit of Detroit Award recipient and an Affirmations LGBT CENTER Jan Stevenson awardee. Connect with him at Charles@pridesource.com.

Creep Of The Week

Stedfast Baptist Church

BY D'ANNE WITKOWSKI

Unless, of course, you know about the absolutely heinously hateful shit Romero has said about gay people. Then any pity you have for him really evaporates.

Welcome to this episode of "Christian Hypocracy: Anti-Gay Christian Edition." It's been a while since we've done one of these so let's start off 2019 old-school style and call out an anti-LGBTQ public figure who turns out to not be so morally upstanding after all.

Let me introduce you to Donnie Romero, former pastor of the Stedfast Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas.

He's the former pastor because he did some sins that "disqualified" him from pastorhood.

Romero's pastor buddy Steven Anderson came to Stedfast Baptist Church so he could be there to help the church through Romero's announcement.

In a video posted online Anderson explains why Romero had to step down, explaining that Romero's address to the congregation didn't include specifics because his wife and children were there and they didn't want to "humiliate or disturb them."

But for the sake of transparency, Anderson says, he wants to let people know what's going on.

"Even pastors are human," Anderson says. "I'm just going to mention what the sins were without going into detail. Basically the major sin involved was being with prostitutes, and then there were also marijuana and gambling that were also discovered."

Well, first off they're called "sex workers," not prostitutes. Secondly, transparency is a good and rare thing in religious institutions, so yay them, I guess. Plus, Romero looked so damn sad in the video of him addressing his flock to tell them he's bouncing. You could almost feel sorry for him.

Unless, of course, you know about the absolutely heinously hateful shit Romero has said about gay people. Then any pity you have for him really evaporates.

As the Star-Telegram reports, Southern Poverty Law Center designated Stedfast church a hate group in 2015. And that was before Romero went off about the Pulse nightclub victims in 2016.

"These 50 Sodomites were all perverts and pedophiles and they are the scum of the earth, and the earth is a little bit better place now, and I'll even take it a little further," he said according to the Star-Telegram. "I heard on the news today that there are still several dozen of these queers in ICU, and I will pray that God will finish the job that that man started."

Now, I've been writing about anti-gay folks for over a decade now, and that is honestly one of the most vile quotes I have ever encountered. The lack of compassion is astounding. And notice that the guy with the gun, the guy who murdered scores of people and injured many more, is viewed as a tool of God's will doing the Lord's work with an assault rifle. Never mind that the shooter was Muslim, which in most circumstances would probably be a deal-breaker for Romero and his church. Hey, nobody's perfect.

Anderson, too, is no stranger to hate.

"The good news is that at least 50 of these pedophiles are not going to be harming children anymore," Anderson said after the Pulse shooting according to the Washington Post. "The bad news is that a lot of the homos in the bar are still alive, so they're going to continue to molest children and recruit people into their filthy homosexual lifestyle."

It bears repeating, again and again, that being LGBTQ does not make someone more likely to molest children. That's a gross lie repeated by gross people. Nor do LGBTQ people recruit, unless you count lesbians who form the core of any good softball team.

Also according to the Post, "In one sermon recorded at his church, Anderson suggested the world could be AIDS-free by Christmas if only people 'executed the homos like God recommends.'"

Has this guy met Mike Pence? Because I think they'd be great buds. They have a lot in common. In fact, should Trump get impeached I suspect Anderson could find a home in a Pence Administration simply by submitting a resume with his AIDS-Free By Christmas plan alone.

In case you were worried, no, Stedfast Baptist Church did not decide that being hateful was maybe a really crappy way to be Christian. Instead they doubled down, electing Jonathan Shelley to be their new pastor. He hates gays, too.

"They hate God. God has already given them up," he says in an Oct. 2018 video according to the Star-Telegram "That's the reason they're doing these vile, disgusting things. They're beasts, they're wicked, they're abominable, they're filthy today."

Feeling disgusted? Well, you could pray for their souls, but I'm not sure they have any. It's probably more effective to visit splcenter.org and make a donation to their work combating the kind of hate Stedfast perpetuates. Amen.

D.C. Circuit Court Sides with Trump on Trans Military Ban

BY CHRIS JOHNSON

The D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals sided with President Trump on the transgender military ban. (Photo by AgnosticPreachersKid via Wikimedia Commons)

A federal appeals court has sided with President Trump on his attempt to ban transgender people from the military, marking the first court victory for the administration on the anti-trans policy as litigation against it moves through the courts.

In a five-page decision, a three-judge panel on the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals overturns a preliminary injunction issued by U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly barring the Trump administration from banning transgender service members.

Although the D.C. Circuit has lifted one preliminary injunction against the transgender military ban, three more orders against the policy remain in effect. Transgender people will be able to continue to serve in the U.S. armed forces as litigation moves forward in the courts.

The unsigned ruling was a per curiam decision, which means it was unanimous. The three-judge panel consisted of U.S. Circuit Judge Stephen Williams, a Reagan appointee; U.S. Circuit Judge Thomas Griffith, a George W. Bush appointee; and U.S. Circuit Judge Robert Wilkins, an Obama appointee.

The opinion indicates Wilkins and Griffiths plan to issue a longer opinion at some time in the future and Williams plans a concurring opinion.

The order might also not be the D.C. Circuit's final word on the transgender military ban. The opinion itself notes "today's decision is not a final determination on the merits," but a decision on a whether a preliminary injunction should remain in place as litigation continues.

Cited as the D.C. Circuit's reason for lifting the order is the plan issued by former Defense Secretary James Mattis seeking to implement Trump's 2017 tweet and subsequent order against allowing transgender people to serve "in any capacity" in the military.

The court concludes Kollar-Kotelly "made an erroneous finding that the Mattis Plan was not a new policy" because she ignored certain nuances about the plan.

"The government took substantial steps to cure the procedural deficiencies the court identified in the enjoined 2017 Presidential Memorandum," the order says. "These included the creation of a panel of military and medical experts, the consideration of new evidence gleaned from the implementation of the policy on the service of transgender individuals instituted by then-Secretary of Defense Ash Carter ('the Carter Policy'), and a reassessment of the priorities of the group that produced the Carter Policy."

The Mattis plan allows transgender people to continue to serve in the military if they "have been stable for 36 consecutive months in their biological sex" and do not seek transition-related case, such as gender reassignment surgery, are not diagnosed with gender dysphoria or came out as transgender during the period of open service under former Defense Secretary Ashton Carter during the Obama administration.

Although transgender advocates have made the case gender dysphoria is a defining characteristic of being transgender and thus the policy amounts to a full-fledged ban, the court disputes that notion.

"We can find nothing in the record to support this definition of being transgender, as all of the reports supporting both the Carter Policy and the Mattis Plan defined transgender persons as 'identifying' with a gender other than their biological sex," the order says. "Indeed, those reports repeatedly state that not all transgender persons seek to transition to their preferred gender or have gender dysphoria."

The order also cites legal precedent requiring courts to give deferences to the military on whether individuals are eligible for combat.

"We must recognize that the Mattis Plan plausibly relies upon the 'considered professional judgment' of 'appropriate military officials,' and appears to permit some transgender individuals to serve in the military consistent with established military mental health, physical health and sex-based standards," the order says.

The ruling was handed down in the case of Doe v. Trump, the case against the transgender military ban filed by the National Center for Lesbian Rights and GLBTQ Advocates & Defenders.

Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights, said in a statement the ruling is "a devastating slap in the face to transgender service members who have proved their fitness to serve and their dedication to this country."

"We will keep fighting this cruel and irrational policy, which serves no purpose other than to weaken the military and punish transgender service members for their patriotism and service," Minter said.

Minter told the Blade the legal team is considering asking the D.C. Circuit for an en banc rehearing, adding, "This is not a final decision on the merits, and we are very confident of our ability to make our case in the district court as the case proceeds."

Jennifer Levi, director of the Transgender Rights Project for GLBTQ Advocates & Defenders, said in a statement the opinion is "based on the absurd idea that forcing transgender people to suppress who they are in order to serve is not a ban."

"It ignores the reality of transgender people's lives, with devastating consequences and rests on a complete failure to understand who transgender people are," Levi said. "It is also destabilizing to the military to so dramatically reverse a policy that has been in place for over 2 years that senior military officials acknowledge has operated with no problems."

The U.S. Justice Department didn't immediately respond to the Blade's request to comment on the opinion.

The D.C. Circuit issues the order less than a month after hearing oral arguments on whether to dissolve Kollar-Kotelly injunction against the transgender military ban. At the time, the three-judge panel didn't give a clear signal on which way they'd rule on the issue.

The order is handed down as the Justice Department has two requests pending before the U.S. Supreme Court seeking intervention in three transgender military cases, including Doe v. Trump. The other two cases are Karnoski v. Trump and Stockman v. Trump, which are pending before the U.S. Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

One request calls on the Supreme Court to take the rare step of granting review of the cases on an interlocutory basis to allow enough time for justices to issue final decision on the policy before the end of the year. The other seeks a stay on the preliminary injunctions against the policy, which would essentially allow the Trump administration to bar transgender service members as litigation moves forward.

Minter said the D.C. Circuit decision moots the Justice Department's request for cert before judgment and a stay in the Doe v. Trump case, but doesn't directly affect the Trump administration's requests before the Supreme Court in other cases.

With respect to those cases, Minter said the D.C. Circuit decision "may weigh against the court granting cert" because the Trump administration urged the Supreme Court to consolidate all of them.

"It does not directly affect the government's motion for stays of the injunctions in Karnoski and Stockman, though it certainly raises the stakes of that request, since the injunction in Doe has now been dissolved by the D.C. Circuit," Minter added.

This article originally appeared in the Washington Blade and is made available in partnership with the National Gay Media Association.

► Cuba

Continued from p. 11

TransCuba Network in Villa Clara Province, spoke without hesitation of what she considers a "lack of respect." She is referring to the Article 68 modifications and the announcement of another referendum to approve the Family Code.

TransCuba is a group of transsexuals affiliated with CENESEX and lead by Malú Cano, a trans woman who frequently appears with Mariela Castro in the media and on social media.

Dagnis is 36-years-old and says she was deported to the island after visiting some Latin American cities. "I left this country because of the rampant discrimination that exists, I have not been able to operate, I have not been able to do anything," she explains.

Thirty-nine sex-reassignment surgeries have taken place in Cuba over the last decade, according to the Trabajadores newspaper in the middle of this year. A diagnosis of "gender dysphoria," a requirement that part of the international trans advocacy movement rejects, is still required in order to reach the operating room.

Romero categorizes the country as "very late" and says living according to her gender identity leaves her feeling isolated everyday.

"Now they are taking away from me the possibility of forming a home," she says in relation to the draft article.

Ramón Silverio, nevertheless, assures "a large part of this community has never been interested in marriage."

"I don't understand why there is this setback," said Abel Raúl, a young man with Christian parents who moved to Villa Clara from eastern Cuba.

Mariela Castro Espín, (a member of the National Assembly) since the beginning of the debates has insisted that "there is no setback" and everything is due to a misinterpretation of the parliament's first communiqué that was published on Twitter on Dec. 18.

CENESEX launched a social media campaign during the parliamentary sessions with the hashtag #IVoteYes and the slogan "Rewrite happiness."

Castro Espín was the furthest away during parliament's closing session and attributed the intention of numerous people to vote against the draft constitution over the exclusion of Article 68 the announcement of another popular consultation exclusively on marriage to the "counter revolution."

Raisel Nuñez Medina, another one of the young people who spoke with Tremenda Nota in the park in Santa Clara, considers the debates around marriage "were as if it was something abnormal, and there were thousands of more important things to discuss."

"I know couples who have lived in the same home for more than 30 years and had put their hopes in their legal union to make their future plans," he says.

Ramón Silverio, who agrees with CENESEX's position, supports Article 82 and wants to influence El Mejunje's clientele in order to get more votes in favor of the draft constitution.

"Since Sunday we have been conducting a campaign that includes exhaustive explanations of the article," he declared to Tremenda Nota. "I am convinced that the majority is going to vote yes in the referendum."

"For its part, an LGBTI+ group from Placetas, a city near Santa Clara, on Dec. 25 made an announcement on Facebook that left out propaganda from the yes and no (factions) and reflects on the inconsistencies of official activism.

The group considers that the version of the marriage article approved by the parliament "does not satisfy the demands of the LGBTI communities."

"Some activists were controlled by indications of waiting later," said a document signed by CENESEX collaborators that denounced the claims.

The revelation seems to allude to instructions sent by the institution (CENESEX) to its "community networks" in order to avoid answering questions or public acts against the homophobic campaign that various evangelical churches have promoted. The declaration suggests Placetas LGBTI will vote in favor of the new constitution, although its members also demanded the elimination from the constitutional text the provision that "authorizes" the right to marriage equality to go to a referendum.

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Comedian Talks New Kink Series, Queer Sex and Hollywood Homophobia

BY CHRIS AZZOPARDI

Damn that bulging carpometacarpal joint. Without it, Margaret Cho's kink play could've been trouble-free, but nope – that thumb joint has been "the bane of my existence since 1991," she tells me.

That's right: I talked to Margaret Cho and we somehow landed on the topic of fisting. These things happen! (They especially do if, like I did, you launch your convo with Cho by informing her that your introduction to the word "fisting" was via her early stand-up).

Clearly, our afternoon chat took many wild and sexually freewheeling turns when the trailblazing comic called to discuss executive producing "Mercy Mistress," an Asian-led web series exploring BDSM through the relationship of its lead, a queer Chinese-American dominatrix named Mistress Yin (played by actress-activist Poppy Liu), and her new client. The series is based on sex-work activist and BDSM educator Yin Q's memoir. Difficult digits aside, Cho discussed her intro to kink, diversity casting, what makes queer sex special and why Christian Grey should've been a sub.

You've long spoken openly about sex, sexuality and kink. Why is it important to you to talk about queer sex in your work?

It's just another way to embellish identity. There are just ways of being ourselves, and when you're queer and you come out, you come out to a world where you kind of need to figure out who you are because the examples aren't out there for us. They aren't defined. The lanes aren't so, like, obvious (laughs). So, you really need to create it.

When I was growing up in the '80s and '90s we had to deal with AIDS, which was such a huge, difficult monstrosity to get your head around and also to understand what we could do sexually that was not fluid bonded, so that's where bondage and BDSM – all that kind of stuff – really came into the culture in a very, very big way. So, I was working in San Francisco at a lesbian BDSM collective making leather dildos and vaginas. (Laughs)

I believe you're referring to Stormy Leather.

Yeah. Way back when. And so I was just very interested in that world, and it just developed alongside everything. Now, BDSM is very mainstream with "Fifty Shades of Grey" and that kind of stuff, so it's cool.

Is there a toy that you made that you were particularly proud of, like, "Hey, I did *that*"?

No, because I wasn't designing them. It was more just the sheer number of ways you could make a strap-on. You could do a chin one, you could do a forehead one, like a unicorn. You could do a thigh one. I think the thigh one actually makes a lot of sense, ergonomically. It's actually better for the lower back than the traditional jockstrap harness.

A strap-on that's easier on the lower back appeals to me as I get older.

Yeah, you wanna make sure you can continue doing these repetitive movements. Strap-ons, there's a great appeal to them. They're really fun, and even if you're not necessarily in a queer sexual relationship, you could definitely use them in any way, shape or form. I think that it adds another element. If you can add another phallus, it's always a positive.

Regarding your own queer sex education, whose examples were you following while growing up in the '80s?

(Sex-positive feminist author) Susie Bright had a major role in that, and in the digital age somebody like (erotica writer) Violet Blue, who's a good friend of mine. Also (former porn actress and sex-positive feminist) Nina Hartley, who is a very, very old friend of mine and really great. They're people who really just showed me the ropes, as it were. (Laughs)

Is "Mercy Mistress" a good introduction for somebody who doesn't know much about the kink world?

Yeah, I think it's a great, great introduction. And also we're seeing Asian-Americans in a way we've never seen before, which I think is really incredible too. That's what I get really excited about. I think we've really gotten to this place that we're looking at diversity as something that is really necessary and really important, so I love that. And it really puts the control back into our hands, like we can actually control the narrative, as opposed to being an object; we're actually running the thing. That's really amazing.

How did you get involved as a producer?

My company, Animal Family, is one of the producers. We got into contact with the "Mercy Mistress" people; they just really spoke to us, and we really loved what they were doing. We loved the landscape of the world they were showing. We loved everything. It just seemed like a natural fit.

When did your interest in kink first pique?

Growing up in San Francisco around that era of queer politics was a very big deal. I grew up on Polk Street, which was really the epicenter; that and the Castro, where Harvey Milk was doing a lot of work. So I think being around all of that, it just seemed inevitable. My father owned a gay bookstore and he hired all these employees who were identifying in different ways, who were transitioning. Transitioning started in the '70s, which is an incredible thing if you think about how early this was. People were transitioning, of course, before that, but that was the first experience I have had with people who were deciding to define their own gender. I got hired at Stormy Leather and I started meeting trans men for the first time. Before that it was just male-to-female trans women, but this was different, when it was female-to-male transition. That was a very big, eye-opening thing; it just gave female body sexuality so much agency, which I had never really experienced before, and I thought that was really amazing and powerful.

In recent years, the trans community has been given a greater mainstream platform. But as we know, and as you point out, transgender people have existed for a very long time.

Yeah, it's been there; it's just that we as a society haven't looked to them, and yet they've changed and shaped culture for centuries. It's really been forever but we just didn't know.

I think the same can be said about the kink community in a way, don't you?

It's something that's been there but we haven't explored it in a mainstream way.

And when we do, do we get it right? Did "Fifty Shades of Grey" get it right?

Well, my feeling about "Fifty Shades of Grey" is, for the Christian Grey character, there's no way he could actually be a dominant. He has to be a male submissive. Usually men who are wealthy, in great positions of power, and who have that much luxury at their disposal to kind of extend on their sexuality are going to be a male submissive because they are just sick of being in charge. That, to me, is where I find it to be off. It's almost like Cinderella or something. It's kind of this weird European folktale where these gender roles are very stringent and don't allow for the men to fully explore their potential in who they really could be.

Because, according to Hollywood, it's the way a man should act.

Yeah. And that's the reason for these stories: to enforce the status quo and keep the culture intact and keep us from overstepping. But I don't want to be told that when you're in there for fantasy. It's not authentic to me. But I appreciate that it exists – and I appreciate that it sent countless millions of people to explore what this kind of sexuality is.

What perspective does "Mercy Mistress" offer on kink that hasn't yet been portrayed in the media?

It's a real place of honesty and truth around what kink is. That it's just about a turn-on and the different kinds of people encountered in this world. The images of people in it are very authentic, which I think is very different.

A gay character tells a straight character: "You all need some kind of manual to figure out kinky sex." What can LGBTQ people teach the straight community about kink?

We listen to our instincts because that's all we have to go on. And that's the biggest truth: We do what we like because we fight so hard to get to do *what* we like.

How does your "interests and limits" list these

See **Margaret Cho**, continued on p. 18

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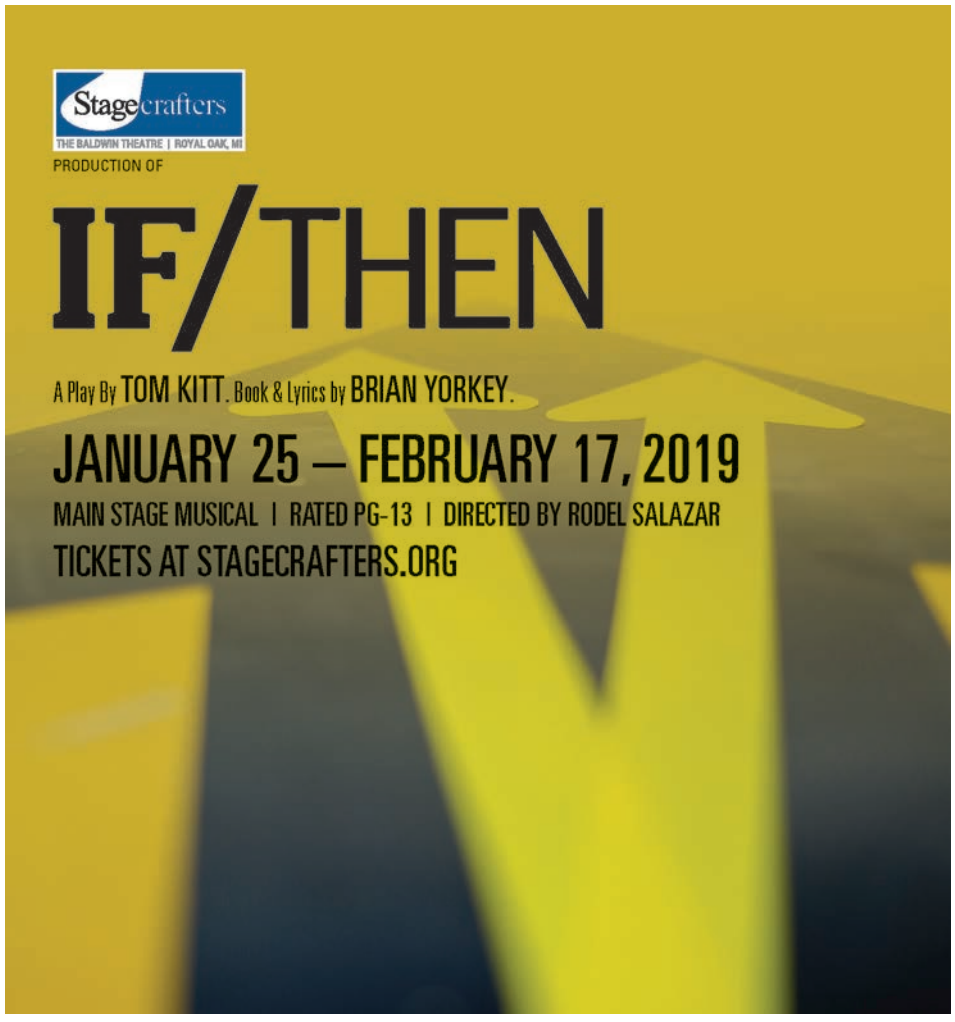
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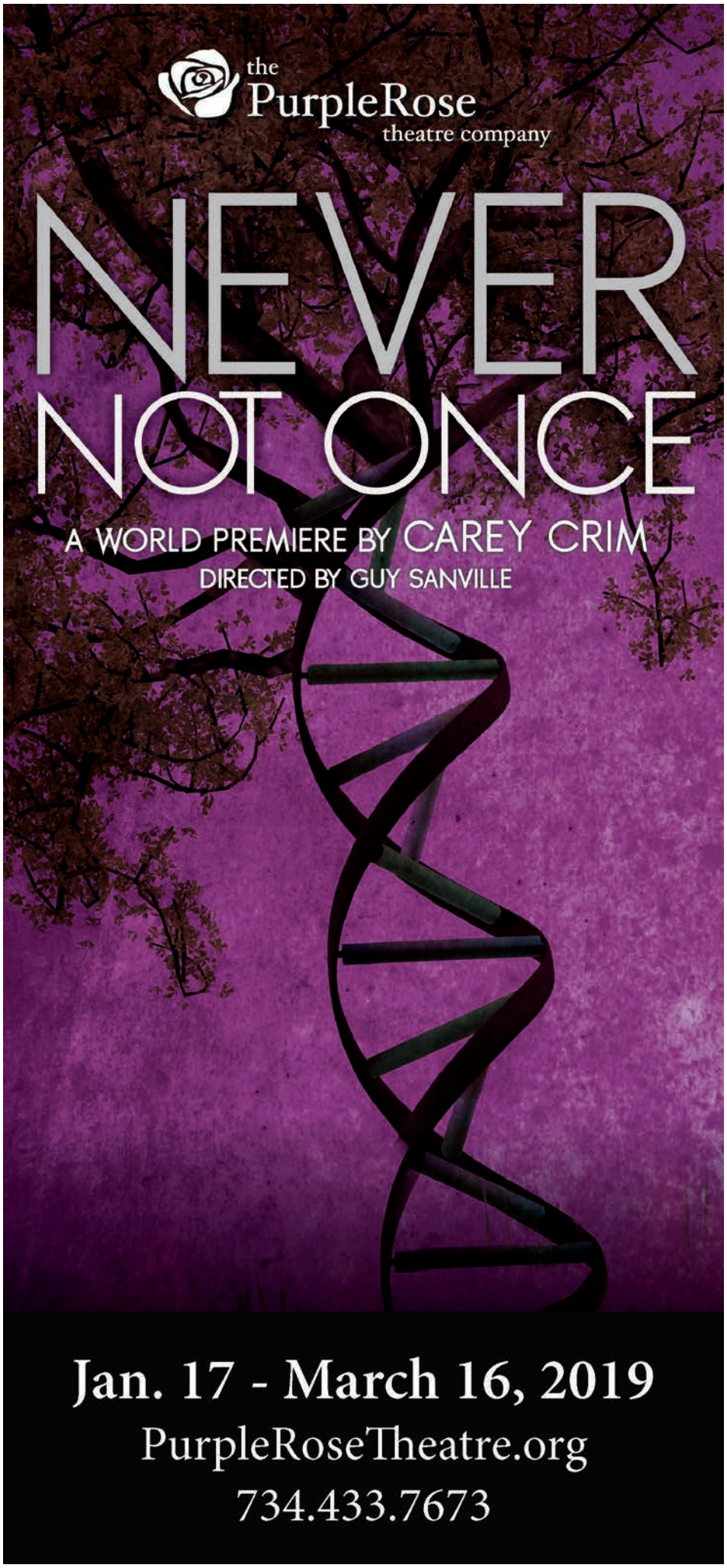


► **Margaret Cho**
Continued from p. 17

days compare to your kink origins?

I've actually gotten way more vanilla, which is funny, because when you're out there, you're trying to show off a little bit, to some degree, as to what you can take and what you're able to handle (laughs). And embellish that – embellish your own prowess. As I'm approaching 50, rapidly, I feel like, actually, I'm much more sedate, but I appreciate all the things that I'm experiencing seeing. I think that's great. But yeah, still can't get that thumb-knuckle in for the fisting! (Laughs)

Even all these years later?

All these years later, I could never get that thumb in there, and I always had this feeling of like, "I'm just not really good enough to do this." But you don't have to get the thumb in.

It's still fisting without the thumb?

It's still fisting without the thumb! And, you know, it's really fun.

In my mind, I'm still laughing about this thumb thing.

It's the first joint that comes out. I'm looking at my thumb right now. It's that first little thumb joint. I just cannot get it in – no matter how small their thumb is, that joint always stick out. That joint has been the bane of my existence since 1991. I just can't get it in there. No kind of lube is gonna (work) and I'm probably as stretched out as you can get and it's still not gonna happen.

And you give up?

I give up. I'm done.

When it comes to kink, does anything shock you anymore?

Mm, no. Because it's in the realm of play, nothing should be off-limits. It's play for a reason; it's just fantasy. It's these cathedrals we construct around our imagination; they have no bearing to what is in the real world, you know? If it's just play, everything is just play. People get into very wild situations that we don't have to judge or that we don't have to say, "That's too far," because it's not for public consumption; it's just between two people or between however many people have agreed on this particular fantasy.

Have you seen "Call Me By Your Name"?

Yes, yes, I've seen that.

Some in the queer community wanted to see Armie Hammer's character eat the peach after Timothée Chalamet's Elio ejaculated in it because that's what happens in the book. Was that a missed kink opportunity?

I think that's exactly what should happen, but homophobia still exists, even in the realm of film and in the realm of not even what's real, but what's possible.

It seems Hollywood is walking a tight rope. "Bohemian Rhapsody" was damaging when it comes to the way gay sex is portrayed in film. I think Hollywood really has muted our sex lives to be palatable for mainstream consumption. What's your take on the way queer sex is portrayed in mainstream Hollywood films?

We're always going to have to strive for better and strive for more. There are examples where it actually goes very well. I'm thinking about Wong Kar-wai's "Happy Together," which has incredible sex scenes, and that film is about 20 years old, *and* it's from Hong Kong and that's another element of it. Hopefully we'll get more of that.

But you know, it's still developing and still growing. There's just the complexity of the sexuality too. I just saw "Boy Erased," which to me did a great job in really talking about how we can be misguided and misunderstood, like whether it's assault, that it actually *can* be assault, that there's all these questions: Is this rape? And, yes, it is. That was actually the first time I had seen that issue come up in a mainstream movie.

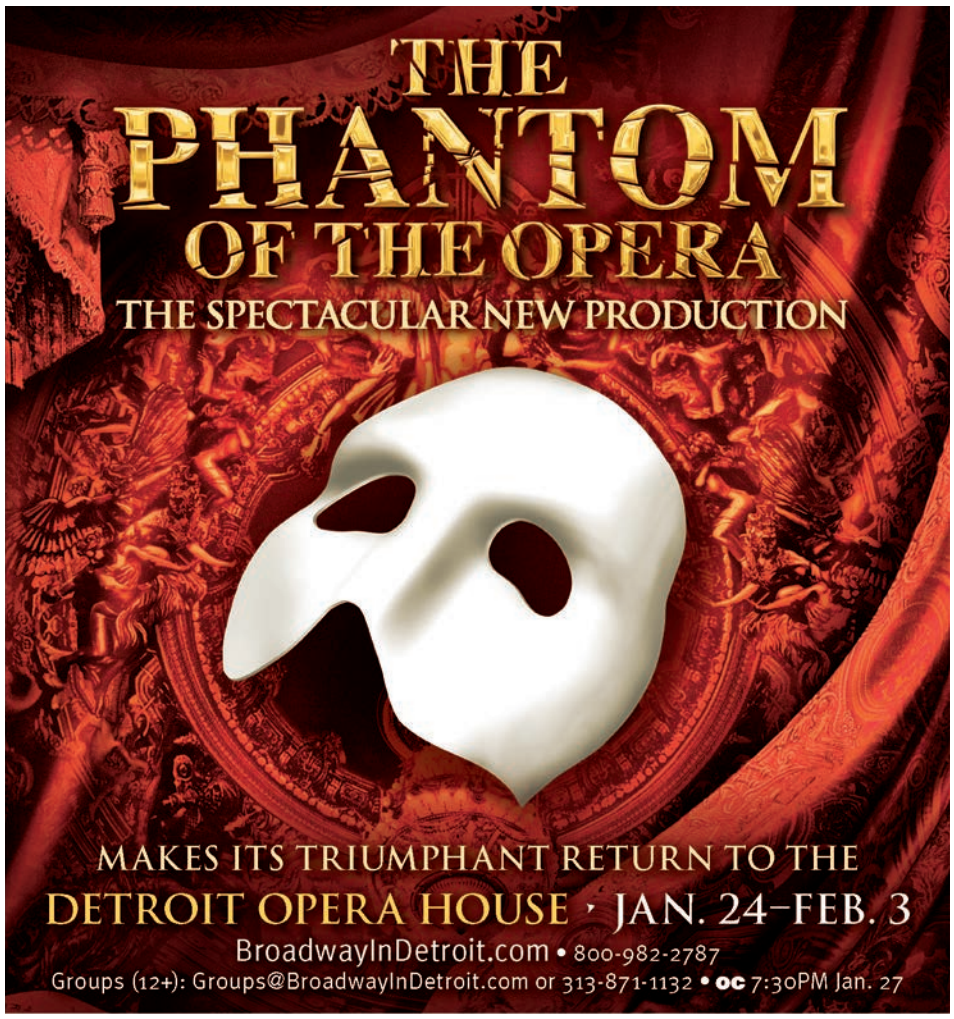
Do you think that scene was important?

I thought it was important because it was giving permission for a male survivor to say that it happened and there was no thinking of, "Oh, he deserved it," or, "He wouldn't mind that because he wanted that anyway." It being brought up was really meaningful, and as a survivor myself it was a really important thing that I had never seen in a film, especially with male characters. That kind of really blew my mind.

I'd like to come back to Asian representation in media, since you blazed that trail with your 1994 sitcom "All-American Girl." As someone who keeps finding new ways to break that ground, and after "Crazy Rich Asians" and "Mercy Mistress," what do you hope is the next step for Asian representation?

I just hope there's more, which there is, which is great. I'm really excited about it. I'm so thrilled about "Crazy Rich Asians" and, of course, "All the Boys I've Loved Before." And now both of those projects are going to have sequels. They're already in the works; it's happening. And there's more and more. So now we're looking at more of an excitement around Asian-American participation in entertainment, which is something I've been working on for more than 20 years, trying to get there, so this is a realization of that dream. It's very exciting.

As editor of Q Syndicate, the international LGBTQ wire service, Chris Azzopardi has interviewed a multitude of superstars, including Cher, Meryl Streep, Mariah Carey and Beyoncé. His work has also appeared in GQ, Vanity Fair and Billboard. Reach him via his website at www.chris-azzopardi.com and on Twitter (@chrisazzopardi).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From Struggle to Success

BY JASON A. MICHAEL

Melinda Phelps did not initially set out to be a certified public accountant. Born and raised in Detroit, and a product of Michigan colleges, Phelps first started out as a stockbroker. But as a proud African-American lesbian woman, Phelps said she could only go so far.

"I kept hitting the proverbial glass ceiling for black, gay women," Phelps said. "I was even told that gay people are not supposed to have management positions. So, I kept getting fired because of who I am."

At one firm, Phelps made the ultimate mistake – she asked a co-worker out on a date.

"I thought the signs were there for me to approach her, but I guess I scared her off," Phelps recalled. "She faked like she was engaged, even put on a ring that I didn't see before. She shared my text conversation asking her out to all our peers at work."

Immediately, Phelps said, she was shunned.

"We went to a week training where, by then, all of my peers knew I had asked her out," said Phelps. "No one wanted to sit next to me on the plane. People were commenting about how disgusting I was to my face. ... It was clear that my career there was over."

Phelps then moved to Houston, but she couldn't get away from the alleged scandal.

"My reputation followed me," she said. "The accounting industry is very small, especially when you are known for highly specialized tax experience like I was at the time. From that point on, I knew that my career as an accountant would always be tainted by this experience."

Phelps moved on to other firms, but she kept facing the same problem and kept getting laid off or fired because of her openness about her sexuality.

"Because of so many layoffs back-to-back, it's even hard to this day to get a corporate job because my resume has all these short-term, but progressive, tenures at jobs," she said. "It makes it look as though I'm not trustworthy, or unstable, and jump job to job on purpose."

Feeling she had no other option, Phelps started her own practice, M.S. Phelps, CPA, PLLC. Initially, she started it in Texas, but shortly after she decided to come back to Michigan because of a close support system of family and friends she had built. Back home, Phelps built a practice catered to her specialties.

"I'm not your typical accountant," she said. "I'm more of a corporate tax accountant. Businesses like General Motors, Ford, they need people with my expertise to help them manage their tax situation because they are exposed to tax filing requirements in every city, state and country that they do business. That's what I primarily specialize in. Or small business owners who don't want to handle their accounting and tax situation so they outsource it to people like me to handle their bookkeeping and tax filing."

After starting her own business Phelps didn't have to worry about discrimination due to her sexuality, but she said she still faces difficulties associated with being a black, gay, female business owner from the outside community. She said in many ways she feels isolated and heartbroken.

"The reason why I say it's isolating is because you have no support from any community," Phelps said. "The African-American community believes that gay

people are evil and will go to hell, as they are influenced by their churches who teaches them this. All the other communities not only shun gay people, but they see blacks as inferior. Especially black women. We're looked upon as being angry, aggressive, almost ape-like."

But lack of support aside, Phelps said she has learned that in many ways she's a "fighter." She added that her difficulties in business have only spurred her on to work harder.

"I couldn't let them win. I may have lost many battles, but I didn't lose the war," she said. "I would advise anyone: don't give up on yourself. Stop listening to people. Believe your own instincts. When you fail, and you will, take it as a learning experience and strive to do better the next time around."

Today Phelps strives to find balance in life. In addition to her business Phelps also teaches accounting at Clair University as an adjunct professor, is in law school at Loyola University Chicago and is an avid golfer and networker.

Happy to be back home, Phelps said the best thing about being back in Detroit is "the authenticity of people," she said. "People here are real about it. They keep it real and that's what I like and that's what I missed."

To find out more about Phelps' services, visit msphelpscpa.com.

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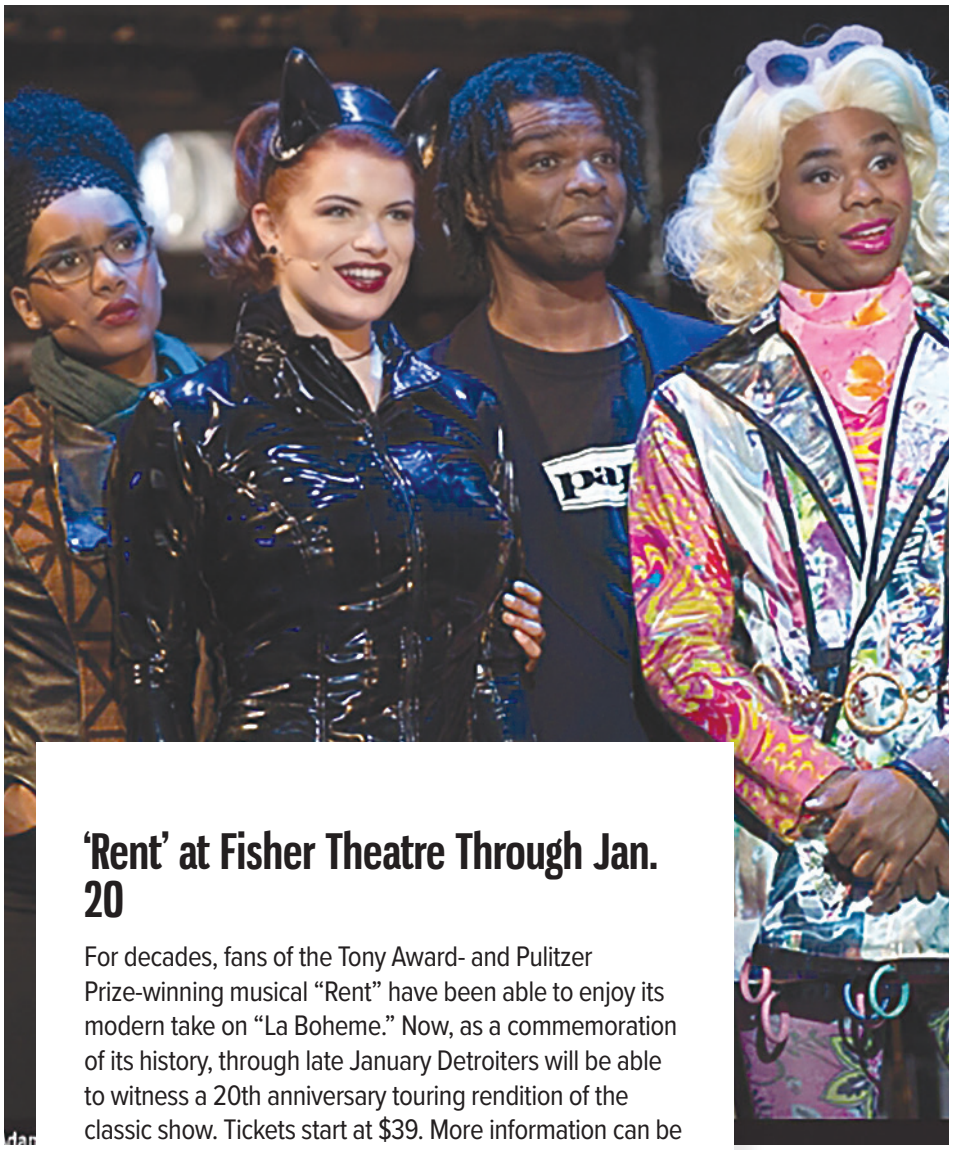
Happenings



‘Rent’ at Fisher Theatre Through Jan. 20

For decades, fans of the Tony Award- and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical “Rent” have been able to enjoy its modern take on “La Boheme.” Now, as a commemoration of its history, through late January Detroiters will be able to witness a 20th anniversary touring rendition of the classic show. Tickets start at $39. More information can be found online at broadwayindetroit.com.

MUSIC & MORE

Kacey Musgraves at The Royal Oak Music Theatre January 10, 7 p.m. Kacey Lee Musgraves is an American country music singer and songwriter. She self-released three albums before appearing on the fifth season of the USA Network’s singing competition Nashville Star in 2007, where she placed seventh. Royal Oak Music Theatre, 318 W. 4th St.,Royal Oak. 248-399-2980. royaloakmusictheatre.com. axs.com.

The Greatest Showman Sing-Along! January 11, 7 p.m. Join us for a special sing-along screening with onscreen lyrics! Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St.,Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. michtheater.org.

Mozart Birthday Bash at Ann Arbor’s Hill Auditorium January 12, 8 p.m. Mozart’s farewell piece, the Requiem, summarizes his genius with heart-melting melodies, with special guests, including Mozart Piano Concerto No. 9 in E-flat major with Alon Goldstein, piano, returning by popular demand. Pre-concert lecture at 7 p.m. Hill Auditorium, 825 N. University Ave.,Ann Arbor. 734-7643-464. a2so.com.

WDET’s Ann Delisi Interviews Flint Eastwood Lead Singer Jax Anderson at Willis Show Bar January 13, 7 p.m. Join Ann Delisi and Jax Anderson, lead singer for Flint Eastwood, for a one-on-one intimate conversation. She will perform a short set and take audience questions. Complimentary food by Chef Max Hardy. Willis Show Bar, 4156 3rd Ave.,Detroit. 313-788-7469. anndelisi@wdet.org. willisshowbar.com.

Chamber Concert: Alon Goldstein at the Jewish Community Center January 14 1:30 p.m. The finest chamber music is played by A2SO musicians and guests. These non-denominational, hour-long concerts are open to listeners of all ages. Jewish Community Center, 2935 Birch Hollow Drive,Ann Arbor. 734-971-0990. jccannarbor.org. tickets.a2so.com.

Detroit Zoo Kicks Off Wild Winter Weekends January 19, 10 a.m. Embrace the winter weather this season during our Wild Winter weekends at the Detroit Zoo! Wild Winter is a fun way to experience the magic of the Zoo in winter. The Detroit Zoo, 8450 W. 10 Mile Road,Royal Oak. detroitzoo.org.

‘Jess Hilarious’ Moore comes to the MGM Grand January 19, 7 p.m. Social media phenomenon and comedian Jessica “Jess Hilarious” Moore is bringing her hilarious and unique stand-up performance to the MGM Grand. MGM Grand Detroit, 1777 3rd Ave.,Detroit. 877-888-2121. mgmresorts.com.

Flint Symphony Orchestra Presents Rachmaninoff’s Symphony No.2 January 19, 7:30 p.m. Experience the beauty of Rachmaninoff’s Symphony No. 2, a series of orchestral solos erupting in a final rowdy, jousting dance! Pre-concert talk at 6:30 p.m. The Whiting Auditorium, 1241 E. Kearsley St.,Flint. 810-237-7333. thewhiting.com. thefso.org.

The Great Tamer at The Power Center January 19, 8 p.m. A surreal masterpiece that was the surprise hit of many European festivals last summer. The Great Tamer is a visually stunning pageant that grapples with the meaning of life and the mystery of death. Power Center, 121 Fletcher St.,Ann Arbor. 734-647-3327 smtd.umich.edu.

Michigan Philharmonic Presents ‘Miniature Masterpieces’ January 20, 2 p.m. Featuring a variety of chamber music with a little twist as we welcome, Whitney George as composer and narrator of her very cool The Inn at St. John’s, 44045 Five Mile Road,Plymouth. 734-414-0600. theinnatstjohns.com. michtix.com.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Celebration January 21, Join the Flint Public Library and the Flint Institute of Arts to commemorate the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. with a full day of free activities that emphasize identity, unity and community engagement. Free Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St.,Flint. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org.

Safe and Effective Management of Pain and Addiction January 22, 7:30 p.m. Dr. Carl Christensen and Dr. Mark Weiner will discuss relative risks and benefits of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic pain management. St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Education Center Auditorium, 5305 Elliott Drive,Ypsilanti. 734-485-8725. dawnfarm.org.

The Novi Home Show is Back! January 25, 2 p.m. Showcasing home and landscaping trends. Suburan Collection Showplace, 46100 Grand River Avenue,Novi. 586-752-6381. gmonette@allseasonscommunications.com.

42nd Ann Arbor Folk Festival @ Hill Auditorium January 25, 6:30 p.m. The annual Ann Arbor Folk Festival returns for two dynamic and different nights of folk and roots music. The Ark, 316 S.Main St.,Ann Arbor. 734-763-TKTS theark.org.

Flint Institute of Arts 12th Annual Community Gala January 26, 6 p.m. Community Gala is a diversity initiative presented in conjunction with the exhibition openings of Vanessa German: Miracles and Glory Abound and Engaging African Art: Works from the Dr. Horn Collection. Flint Institute of Arts, 1120 E. Kearsley St.,Flint. 810-234-1695. flintarts.org.

Cabaret 313 Presents University of Michigan Musical Theatre Seniors January 26, 7 p.m. As the University of Michigan Musical Theatre seniors prepare for their annual Theatrical Industry Showcase in New York City, they discover songs that they fall in love with but do not quite make the final cut. N’Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, 52 E. Forest Ave.,Detroit. 313-831-8700. nnamdicenter.org. cabaret313.org.

THEATER

Disney’s Aladdin at the Detroit Opera House! 1 p.m. From the producer of The Lion King comes the timeless story of “Aladdin,” a thrilling new production filled with unforgettable beauty, magic, comedy and breathtaking spectacle. Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St.,Detroit. 313-237-SING. broadwayindetroit.com.

Royal Starr Returns to Host Filmmaker Community Mixer 7 p.m. The Royal Starr Arts Institute, a non-profit organization working to strengthen and connect the filmmaking community in Michigan, will be hosting a networking event at Hamilin Corner in Royal Oak. Hamlin Corner, 386 North Main Street,Royal Oak. 248-556-5428 hamlincorner.com. royalstarr.org.

‘Rent’ is Back at The Fisher Theatre – 20th Anniversary Tour! 8 p.m. A re-imagining of Puccini’s La Bohème, “Rent” follows an unforgettable year in the lives of seven artists struggling to follow their dreams without selling out. With its inspiring message of joy and hope in the face of fear, this timeless. Fisher Theatre, 3011 W. Grand Blvd.,Detroit. 313-872-1000.

A2CT Presents “Oliver” January 10, 7:30 p.m. In a musical adaptation of the Dickens novel, young Oliver runs away to London. A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St.,Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228. a2ct.org/shows/olive.r

The House on Poe Street at The Detroit Repertory Theatre January 10, 8:30 p.m. Gothic ghosts encounter modern monstrosities when twin sisters inherit

OUTINGS

Thursday, January 10

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Farmington Hills – Oakland County 7 p.m. All youth are welcome to attend this Free group. Oakland United Methodist Church, 30450 Farmington Road,Farmington. 248-626-3620. oaklandumc.org. standwithtrans.org.

Toastmasters International SpeakOUT! LGBTQ Meeting 7 p.m. Professional & personal communication skills development. Jim Toy Community Center, 319 Braun Court,Ann Arbor. 734-995-9867. lawrencemoebs@gmail.com. speakout.toastmastersclubs.org.

‘The House on Poe Street’ at The Detroit Repertory Theatre 8:30 p.m. Gothic ghosts encounter modern monstrosities when twin sisters inherit the house where Poe is reputed to have composed “The Raven.” Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson,Detroit. 313-868-1347. DetRepTh@aol.com.

Jazz & Soul Singer Sky Covington & Club Crescendo Live Every Thursday Night 9 p.m. With Jimi Blues on keys, Alex Brooks on drums, Greg Cook on bass and Special Guest. No Cover. 660 W. Baltimore Detroit. 313-873-1739. northernlightslounge.com.

Saturday, January 12

LGBT Community Chat 11 a.m. Saturday LGBT Chat is an on going social discussion group meets every week to discuss issues LGBT people face. Coming out, dating and much more. Come join us every Saturday at 11 a.m. Java Hut Ferndale Michigan, 165 W. 9 mile. 248-632-8274. redbellysenegal90@gmail.com.

Ferndale Pride Euchre Tournament Sponsored by Tito’s 6 p.m. Come show off your Euchre skills and help the Ferndale Elks raise money for Ferndale Pride. Sign in begins at 6 p.m. with tournament at 7. $20 buy-in. $0.50 Euchre 6 games, 8 hands Ferndale Elks Club #1588, 22856 Woodward Ave.,Ferndale. 248-542-2626. julia@ferndalepride.com.

Monday, January 14

Stand with Trans 2018 Support Groups – Macomb County 6:30 p.m. Macomb Teen/Youth Support Group: All youth are welcome to attend this free group. Come and meet other trans youth and teens and support each other through your journeys. Dakota High School, 21051 21 Mile Road,Macomb. 586-723-2700. chippewavalleyschools.org.

Wednesday, January 16

Stand with Trans Support Groups – Livonia – Wayne County 6:30 p.m. Free to all, group meets the 3rd Wednesday of each month. Emmanuel Lutheran Church, 34567 7 Mile Road,Livonia. standwithtrans.org.

Saturday, January 19

2nd Annual Women’s Automotive Cup Outdoor Hockey Game 6:30 p.m. General Motors and Ford Motor Company female employee hockey teams will face off for charity. All proceeds will benefit Clark Park Coalition and Matrix Theatre Company, two nonprofits located in southwest Detroit. Clark Park, 1130 Clark Ave.,Detroit. info@matrixtheatre.org. clarkparkdetroit.com.

Tuesday, January 22

Strand with Trans Support Groups – Ann Arbor – Washtenaw 6:30 p.m. Trans Support Group meeting the 4th Tuesday of each month. Journey of Faith Christian Church, 1900 Manchester Road,Ann Arbor. standwithtrans.org.

Wednesday, January 23

31st Creating Change Conference 2019 9 a.m. The National LGBTQ Task Force’s 2019 Creating Change Conference convenes in Detroit. We are excited to host our annual national movement gathering in the Motor City. Detroit Marriott at Renaissance Center, 400 Renaissance Drive West,Detroit. 313-568-8000. marriott.com.

Editor’s Pick

MJ Live Michael Jackson Tribute Band at MotorCity Casino Hotel Jan. 27

Considered to be the No. 1 Michael Jackson Tribute Concert band in the world, the group travels performing some of the singer’s greatest hits. This event’s tickets start at $25, with more information to be found online at 313presents.com. This event is 21+.

Editor's Pick

A Touch of Flurries Snowball Pre-Party at Menjos Entertainment Complex

Held on Saturday, Jan. 12 starting at 9 p.m., Menjos Entertainment Complex is hosting a winter-themed pre-party to the MotorCity Snowball 2019. The Snowball's aim is to benefit the Ruth Ellis Center's LGBTQ services. Find more information on the complex's Facebook page: gaybe.am/5P.

the house where Poe is reputed to have composed The Raven. Detroit Repertory Theatre, 13103 Woodrow Wilson,Detroit. 313-868-1347. DetRepTh@aol.com. detroitreptheatre.com.

The Greatest Showman Sing-Along! January 11, 7 p.m. Join us for a special sing-along screening with onscreen lyrics! Inspired by the imagination of P.T. Barnum and with music composed by Oscar, Grammy, Tony, and Golden Globe Award-winning songwriters Benj Pasek & Justin Paul, who Michigan Theater, 603 E. Liberty St.,Ann Arbor. 734-668-8397. michtheater.org.

Farmington Hills Youth Theatre Auditions for Spring Production of The Addams Family January 12, 12 p.m. Free to audition. Please come anytime during the audition hours! Open to both beginning and experienced actors, residents & non-residents in grades 4-12. Costick Center Stage, 28600 West Eleven Mile Road,Farmington Hills. 248-473-1848. bsamelko@fhgov.com. fhgov.com.

The Great Tamer at The Power Center January 19, 8 p.m. A surreal masterpiece that was the surprise hit of many European festivals last summer. The Great Tamer is a visually stunning pageant that grapples with the meaning of life and the mystery of death. Power Center, 121 Fletcher St.,Ann Arbor. 734-647-3327. smtd.umich.edu.

A2CT Auditions for Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike January 20, 7 p.m. Ann Arbor Civic Theatre announces auditions for its main stage production of Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike by Christopher Durang. The production is directed by Cassie Mann. A2CT Studio Theatre, 322 W. Ann St.,Ann Arbor. 734-971-2228. a2ct.org/audition.

Williamston Theatre Presents 'To Quiet the Quiet' January 24, 8 p.m. Having suffered great loss and heartbreak in her life, Kathy, now middle-aged and alone, is a woman on the edge. Williamston Theatre, 122 S. Putnam Road,Williamston. 517-655-SHOW. info@williamstontheatre.org. williamstontheatre.org.

The Phantom of the Opera Returns! January 24, 8 p.m. Andrew Lloyd Webber's "The Phantom of the Opera" makes its triumphant return to Detroit as part of its North American Tour. Critics are raving that this breathtaking production is "bigger and better than ever before." Detroit Opera House, 1526 Broadway St.,Detroit. 313-237-SING. broadwayindetroit.com.

Stagecrafters Presents If/Then January 25, 8 p.m. What if? At the heart of every choice we've ever made lies this question. Baldwin Theatre, 415 South Lafayette,Royal Oak. 248-541-8027. stagecrafters.org.

Cabaret 313 Presents University of Michigan Musical Theatre Seniors January 26, 7 p.m. As the University of Michigan Musical Theatre seniors prepare for their annual Theatrical Industry Showcase in New York City, they discover songs that they fall in love with but do not quite make the final cut. N'Namdi Center for Contemporary Art, 52 E. Forest Ave.,Detroit. 313-831-8700. nnamdicenter.org. cabaret313.org.

'Phantom' Cast to Perform Benefit Concert for Affirmations, Broadway Cares January 28, 6 p.m. Cast members of the national touring production of 'The Phantom of the Opera' will perform a special concert 'Next to Normal' to benefit Affirmations and Broadway Cares/Equity Fights Aids. Along with the performance, the evening The Loving Touch, 22634 Woodward Avenue,Ferndale. 248-820-5596 thelovingtouchferndale.com.

THE HOW AND THE WHY by Sarah Treem Michigan Premiere February 1, 8 p.m.Theatre NOVA, 410 W. Huron,Ann Arbor. 734-635-8450. A2TheatreNOVA@gmail.com.

Reap the Grove by Caity-Shea Violette February 1, 8 p.m. An estranged family reunites for their mother's final days. Reap The Grove is a poignant and darkly funny exploration of partnership, transgenerational trauma, and the anticipated grief of death with dignity. Matrix Theatre Company, 2730 Bagley St.,Detroit. 313-967-0599.info@matrixtheatre.org. matrixtheatre.org.

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Deep Inside Hollywood

10 Best Queer Pop Culture Moments

BY ROMEO SAN VICENTE

'Pose' actress Indya Moore. Photo: JoJo Whilden/FX

Is it because we're all swimming together in the toxic Trump pool that makes every new addition to the LGBTQ cultural canon feel like an act of rebellion? Probably. But even if we were living in a queer-friendly political era, 2018's (they're calling it #20GayTeen on the Internet, just FYI) pop culture output would still be impressive. And not just among ourselves – the mainstream took notice and we didn't have to dilute or code ourselves to make a splash there. The receipts:

1. "Pose" on FX forever smashed ideas about how much trans is too much trans for one show. TV mogul Ryan Murphy stepped back, let transgender actors, writers and directors take over, and it made the show more true, heartfelt and emotional than we even dared to hope for. And over on Viceland, the documentary series "My House" went into the real 2018 ballroom scene and let audiences know exactly what has changed since "Paris is Burning."

2. Janelle Monae's "PYNK" and its accompanying video served as a deliriously gorgeous and hypnotic ode to women of color – both cis and trans – loving other women of color, and it turned into a launching pad for best friends Monae and Tessa Thompson coming out, Thompson as bisexual and Monae as pansexual. If you're confused by the difference, there's always Google.

3. "The Miseducation of Cameron Post" and "Boy Erased," together, formed one solid movie about the toxic world of anti-gay Evangelical conversion camps for LGBTQ young people. "Miseducation" had a queer director in Desiree Akhavan, which informed the film's ability to get the anxiety and power of teenage desire just right, but "Erased," based on author Garrard Conley's lived experience in the church, dove deep into the terror and abuse of fundamentalist belief. See them both.

4. Broadway went Old School this year with revivals of Harvey Fierstein's "Torch Song Trilogy" (closing in January of 2019 and beginning a national tour) and the groundbreaking drama "The Boys In The Band," starring Jim Parsons. They're a reminder that within the lifespan of most members of Generation X, the American public's perception of queer people has shifted in ways that make the word "dramatic" quite an understatement.

5. "Love, Simon" took heat for being about a relatively affluent suburban gay white boy, but as a mainstream multiplex entry with very long legs (its budget was somewhere around $15 million and over its run raked in over 65) this teenage coming out and coming-of-age story was the sweet John Hughes-esque comedy Hollywood hadn't yet bothered to make.

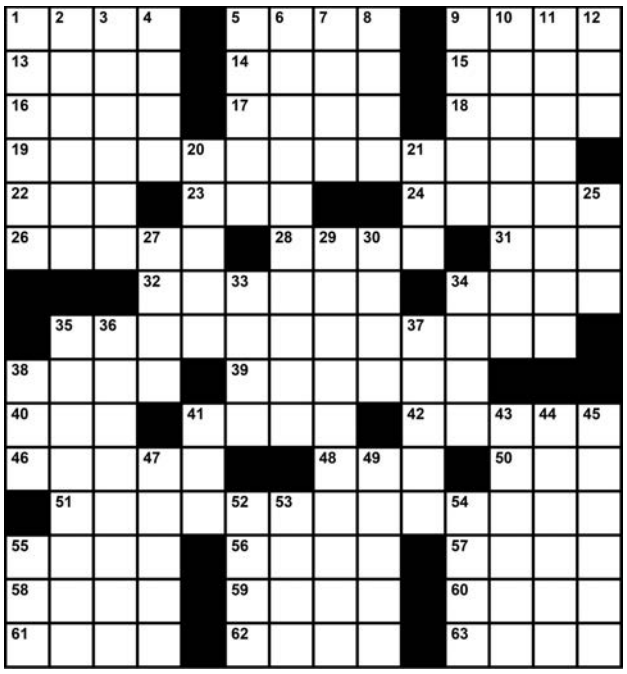
6. "Vida" was the Starz network's queer Latinx show you haven't watched yet, but when you do it will become your very favorite thing. About two Mexican-American sisters in East Los Angeles, it's a dramedy about identity and the making and breaking of family bonds. Go stream it!

7. About a transgender woman going for and getting everything she knows she deserves in the face of *much* adversity, Chilean film "A Fantastic Woman" won the Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film and made a rising star of Daniela Vega.

8. Listen, we still like "Queer Eye" even if we think Tan's fashion advice is a bit too transparently product placement for Bonobos and overly reliant on shirts that are only half tucked in (don't blame France for it, dude). We're into Jonathan's gleefully defiant attack on the masc4masc aesthetic. All day. Every day.

9. Here for lesbian drama: "Disobedience" with Rachel Weisz and Rachel McAdams had the hottest sex, "Skate Kitchen" had better skateboard skills than "Mid90s," "Lizzie" had the best violent attack on the patriarchy, and "The Favourite" had the fanciest, iciest, lady-on-lady seduction in the biggest royal costumes and tall wigs. All of them matter.

10. Haley Kiyoko was MTV's Push Artist of the Year at the 2018 "VMAs." Do you know her yet? You will when you go watch her video for "What I Need," which features queer singer Kehlani. Then you'll wonder why this story of young women running away to be together wasn't a feature-length film. Neither of these young ladies came to play, and you'll soon be seeing and hearing more from both.



Tuesday the Rabbi Saw Pink

QPuzzle

Across

1 “The Lion King” villain
5 They pick up strangers
9 Places for tats, perhaps
13 Choice for Hamlet
14 Discharge
15 Nuts
16 Jessica of “Little Folkers”
17 Like a nimble old goat
18 Acronym for bears
19 Author of the novel version of 35-Across
22 Banned pesticide
23 A little more than bi-
24 Florence’s ___ Vecchio
26 Daughter of a nonhomophobic president
28 Not needing a little blue pill
31 Neither a win nor a loss
32 Stritch of Broadway
34 Sulu’s starship captain
35 Novel or movie about lesbians in the Orthodox Jewish community
38 Tools for Wilde
39 Restraint for a stallion
40 “___ De-Lovely”
41 Opposite of fem.
42 “___ Survive”
46 Like some tricks
48 From A ___
50 Way of the East
51 She played Esti Kuperman in the movie version of 35-Across
55 Start of a Mozart opera title
56 Threesome minus one
57 Bubbly drinks
58 What Santa gave, in verse
59 Vampire novelist Rice
60 Break bread
61 Pride places
62 Sallee of Pentatonix
63 Practices thespianism

Down

1 They may be one-night
2 Fruity mixed drink
3 Top Trappists
4 Paper amount
5 “The Gay Caballero” star Romero
6 Sound equipment for Queen
7 Shuttlecock
8 Eyelid ailment
9 Siege site of 1836
10 Type of comedy, such as Ephron’s “Bewitched”
11 “Queen of Country” Reba
12 Chicago cap word
20 Prefix for Da Vinci’s land
21 Letters on a Johnny Mathis record
25 Cry of fear
27 Big name in oil
29 Result of working for Trump, often
30 Tobias pseudonym
33 “Mamma Mia!” band
34 Shagged, Biblically
35 Unseat a queen, e.g.
36 When fruits are ready to be eaten
37 “My Fair Lady” lady
38 It’s a snap for Annie Leibovitz
41 Dash letters
43 Not straight up
44 For example, “Alas, poor Yorick!”
45 Blemishes on the Indiana Fever’s record
47 Materials for Paul Cadmus etchings
49 String ensemble, maybe
52 Red-coated cheese
53 Deity identified with Diana
54 Style of Marcel Duchamp
55 Contemptible sort

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www.corktownhealth.org

Find over 300 Non-Profit Listings Serving Michigan's LGBTQ Online @ pridesource.com

AIDS/HIV

There are dozens of AIDS/HIV organizations and resources listed at PrideSource.com. Here are just three of them:

AIDS Walk Detroit
Contact info@aidswalkdetroit.org or 248-399-9255 for more information. The walk takes place this year on Sunday, Sept. 15, 8:30 a.m. at the Royal Oak Farmers Market

Macomb County STD Clinic
27690 Van Dyke
Warren, MI 48093
586-465-9217
health.macombgov.org/Health-Programs-HPDC-HIVAIDSCounselingTesting

Matrix Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program
120 Parsons Street
Detroit, MI 48201
888-226-6366
248-545-1435
matrixhumanservices.org/programs/ryanwhite/

UNIFIED - HIV Health and Beyond
3011 W. Grand Blvd. Suite 230
Detroit, MI 48202
313-446-9800
miunified.org
Michigan HIV/STD Hotline
800-872-2437

Advocacy

Equality Michigan
19641 W. 7 Mile, Detroit, MI
313-537-7000
equalitymi.org
Facebook.com/equalitymichigan

Campus

Currently there are 19 organizations listed as active online at pridesource.com/yellow pages. The following are some in the southeast Michigan area:

U-M Ann Arbor
Spectrum Center
Specturmcenter@umich.edu
spectrumcenter.umich.edu
734-763-4186

Oakland University Gender & Sexuality Center
gsc@oakland.edu
oakland.edu/gsc
248-370-4336

Eastern Michigan University
LGBT Resource Center
emich.edu/lgbtrc
734-487-4149

The Lawrence Tech LGBT Resource Center
ltu.edu/student_affairs/lgbt.asp

Wayne State JIGSAW
Facebook.com/groups/WayneStateJIGSAW
wsujigsaw@gmail.com

Community Centers

Michigan has nine active LGBTQ community centers, with a tenth planned in Lansing. Here are three of them.

Jim Toy Community Center
Ann Arbor
jimtoycenter.org.
facebook.com/jimtoycenter
or follow them on Twitter @JimToyCenter.
319 Braun Court
Ann Arbor, MI
734-995-9867

LGBT Detroit
Detroit
lgbtdetroit.org.
facebook.com/lgbtdetroit
@LGBTDetroit.
20025 Greenfield Road
Detroit, MI
Phone: 313-397-2127

Affirmations
Ferndale
goaffirmations.org
facebook.com/Affirmations/
or follow them on Twitter @GoAffirmations.
290 W. Nine Mile Road
Ferndale, MI
248-398-7105

Legal

American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan
Jay Kaplan, Staff Attorney, LGBT Project
2966 Woodward Ave., Detroit, MI
aclumich.org
313-578-6800

Fair Michigan
PO Box 6136
Plymouth, MI 48170
877-432-4764, 313-556-2300
fairmichigan.org
Facebook.com/fairmichigan2016

Know Your RIghts Project
Outlaws U-M student group
outlawslegal@gmail.com
734-995-9867

Older Adults

SAGE Metro Detroit
290 W. Nine Mile Rd. Ferndale, MI
313-578-6812
sagemetrodetroit.org
Facebook: SAGE Metro Detroit

Political

The LGBT and Allies Caucus of the Michigan Democratic Party
Facebook.com/TheLGBTA-CaucusoftheMDP
Stonewall for Revolution
facebook.com/stonewall4reolution

Professional Groups

Detroit Regional LGBT Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 32446
Detroit, MI 48232
detroitlgbtchamber.com
1-800-DET-LGBT

Ties Like Me
Professional networking events
third Weds. 5:30 - 8 p.m.
TiesLikeMe.org
Suits And The City
Lansing, MI
suitsandthecity@gmail.com
suitsandthecity.org

Transgender

FtM Detroit
https://facebook.com/FtMDetroit/
ftmdetroit@gmail.com.

FtM A2 Ypsi
ftmannarborypsilanti@gmail.com
https://facebook.com/ftma2ypsi/

Transgender Michigan
23211 Woodward Ave.
Ferndale, MI
info@transgendermichigan.org
transgendermichigan.org
800-842-2954

Trans Sistas of Color Project
19641 W. 7 Mile Rd. in Detroit
313-537-7000 Ext 107
info@tscopdetroit.org
facebook.com/TSCOPD/

Youth

Ruth Ellis Center
77 Victor Street, Highland Park, MI 48203
info@ruthelliscenter.org
Facebook: Ruth Ellis Center
313-252-1950

Ozone House
102 N. Hamilton Street
Ypsilanti, MI
734-662-2265
734-662-2222

Stand With Trans
Farmington, MI
standwithtrans.org
248-739-9254

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You can add your event to the Pride Source Calendar online and in print by going to PrideSource.com and clicking on Calendar, then "Add Event." Send any press releases and announcements to editor@pridesource.com

Find a digital version of PrideSource Magazine online under Our LGBT Yellow Pages

Find these resources online

Adoption Services
AIDS/HIV Hotlines
AIDS/HIV Organizations
Alzheimer's Association
Animal Shelter
Anti-Violence
Archives/Collections
Campus; Student and Alumni Groups
Cancer Support Groups
Choruses
Community Centers
Employee Resource Groups
Families and Parents
Foster Care
Foundations and Funders
Hotlines & Switchboards
Labor Union
Legal Organizations
Museums
Music Groups
National Organizations
Political Organizations
Professional Organizations
Religious & Spiritual
Senior Living
Seniors
Social/Community Organizations
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Transgender Groups/Services
Women's Health
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